



## **SBA Names Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year**

BURNSVILLE – James Edward (Jim) Marchessault, CEO and President, Business Card Service, Inc. based in Burnsville, Minn., has been named the Minnesota Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The Small Business Person of the year is selected annually based on growth in sales or unit volume, increase in the number of employees, financial strength, innovativeness of product or service and evidence of contributions to community-oriented projects. Steve Saefke of QuestGrowth Partners and Daron Van Helden of the Burnsville Chamber of Commerce nominated Jim for this award.

James Edward (Jim) Marchessault, the oldest of eight children, grew up in a middle class Twin Cities neighborhood. His father, Paul, was an entrepreneur who started printing business cards and stationery in the basement of the family home in Bloomington in 1954. The business grew and supported the Marchessault family as Jim and his siblings grew up. It is in this environment that Jim began learning the basics of entrepreneurship and sound business practice.

Jim began working in the family business in 1966, at age 14, and continued to work there while completing his education. After graduating from Richfield High School in 1971, he went on to three years of college at Normandale Junior College (now Normandale Community College) and the University of Minnesota.

Jim became active full time at Business Card Service, Inc. (BCSI) in 1969 serving in many different capacities. He took primary control of the company in the fall of 1978 and became a

shareholder in December of 1980. He currently serves as president and CEO of the company. He has experience with virtually every aspect of the business and is the driving force behind its success.

In 1975, the business moved from the basement of the family's home to its first 2,000 sq. ft. commercial location in Edina, MN. Quickly outgrowing that facility, the company moved to Burnsville in 1978 and leased new equipment. These changes, along with a whopping 23% interest rate at the time sent the company into a tailspin that culminated when the leasing agent threatened to shut BCSI down after they had missed six months of payments.

Jim, then 26 years old, put together a business plan to downsize the business and get it back to paying its creditors. He then sold the plan to the leasing agent. As part of the plan, Jim took charge of the company. He proceeded to eliminate costs and lay off personnel leading to achieving the objectives of getting the company fiscally healthy again.

An innovative sort, Jim began to re-think the company's business model. In small businesses, innovation is hard to come by with management usually tied to just operating the business on a daily basis. Yet, Jim looked around and discovered that many of the largest corporations in the U.S. had stationery needs that weren't being served well by the printing companies that were available to them at the time. In the early 1980's the company installed a \$650,000 computer system and designed proprietary software to meet the needs of America's largest corporations.

Things started moving in the right direction and the company began a massive expansion program starting in 1984 that included a new building needed to service the new business from Fortune 1000 companies that is was beginning to get in large volume. On Jim's 34<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1986, the second crisis occurred when BCSI's bank, which had just been acquired by a much larger bank presented a letter demanding payment of all principal and interest past due on notes within five days.

Jim, being the action-oriented type person he is, set about raising the money. Once again, he was forced to layoff one-third of the employees. He reached agreement with the bank that allowed BSCI to continue along its growth path.

BCSI currently provides business cards, letterhead, envelopes and notepads to Fortune 500 companies, offering low prices, exceptional quality and extremely fast turnaround with the ease, efficiency and accuracy of BCSI's exclusive automated Single Order Entry System. With an average cost of processing any order at \$90 to \$150 per order (according to Ernst and Young), the automated system can literally save major corporations more than they spend on their customized stationery printing.

Under Jim's leadership, with an aggressive business strategy, identifying opportunities to control costs while enhancing productivity and delivering exceptional quality and service to its customers. Two new accounts and additional facility expansion are expected to more than double BCSI's gross revenues in the next few years.

Jim has obtained two SBA loans used to build two separate buildings to accommodate the company's growth. In 1999, he launched a subsidiary company in Massachusetts with the help of an Industrial Development bond. He is currently expanding his Burnsville facility to 65,000 square feet and production capacity, and is investigating a third facility in the Southwestern United States.

Jim has been in the leadership ranks of the Burnsville Chamber including serving as Chair of the Board. He lends financial support to many of our community-based organizations. Additionally, he contributes countless hours as a volunteer and has been a recipient of the Burnsville Community Build Award. Notably, he has chaired a local community festival, the Burnsville Fire Muster, for three years. He has served on city and county committees, and is currently serving on Governor Tim Pawlenty's Energy Commission.

Marchessault will be honored at a reception highlighting Small Business Week winners on Thursday, May 1, 2008, at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Park.

*For more information:*

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